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THE EDITOR'S ALBUM.

At a time when every *bas bleu*, or young miss just escaped from the boarding-school, is tendering her Album to every visitor, and filling its pages with insignificant autographs, or silly verses, the Editor of the Mirror may perhaps not be thought obtrusive when he produces his Album; not, however, so much to solicit contributions as to exhibit a portion of what he already possesses; but before he does this, he will make a few observations on the history of Albums.

The first Albums were nothing more than the surface of the wall of some frequented place on which those who thought they had wit and were fond of showing it, wrote what they pleased. The sick, who crowded to the temple of Esculapius, are said by antiquaries to have written on the walls their maladies and the means by which they had been cured; and these inscriptions, collected by Hippocrates, formed his work, which may thus be considered as the oldest Album on record. A similar custom prevailed among the Romans; and in the ruins of Herculaneum is a guard-house, the walls of which are covered with inscriptions.

In more modern times the invention of glass has in some degree superseded the white-washed wall, though Shakespeare's house and monument at Stratford on Avon bear testimony that the ancient custom is not extinct. Of window gleanings a curious collection might be made, and we invite such of our readers as are travellers to copy any they may meet with, and forward them to us for some future Album. Shenstone has furnished a stanza, which is often inscribed on the windows of inns by those who wish to flatter their host, and have not the genius to pay him an original compliment.

"Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
Must sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn."

Another traveller, anxious to display his talents as a linquist wrote the following *impromptu*, in four different

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languages, on a window in the Warwick Arms inn, Warwick.

In questa casa troverate
Tout ce qu'on peut souhaiter
Vinum, panem, pisces, carnes,
Coaches, chaises, horses, harness!

An honest, but somewhat cynical John Bull, Thomas Hollis, Esq. who had travelled through a good part of the world, without forming foreign attachments, on landing at Falmouth, on his return from the Continent, thus recorded his feelings on the window of the inn:

"I have seen the specious vain Frenchman, the truckling Dutchman, the tame Dane, the sturdy self-righting Swede, the barbarous Russ, the turbulent Pole, the honest dull German, the pay-fighting Swiss, the subtle splendid Italian, the salacious Turk, the sun-warming lounging Maltese, the piratical Moor, the proud, cruel Spaniard; the bigotted, base Portuguese, with their courtiers; and hail again old England, my native land. Reader, if English, Scotch, or Irish, rejoice in the freedom that is the felicity of thy native land, and maintain it sound to posterity. April 14, 1753."

The inmates of prisons, who have generally plenty of time, much food for reflection, and ample space in the un-furnished walls, frequently give vent to their feelings, and record their misfortunes on the windows and walls of their cells. When the Bastile, that engine of French tyranny, was destroyed in Paris, several inscriptions were found upon the walls. In an interior cell, which, from the gradual decension of the tyranny that populated the place, had been some time without an inhabitant, there was found a feeble inscription on the stone fronting the door, of which the following were the only words that could be read:

"Gravé par l'aide d'un dent du qui je n'ai point aucune besoin." — *La Malheureux de Prie.*

This nobleman, who thus recorded his misfortunes and his name on the wall with one of his teeth, for which he had no longer any occasion, had resided some time in England during the embassy of the Chevalier or Madame

H h

d'Eon to this country, and married an English lady, who died a melancholy death. In another cell was found an inscription, signed Loland, of which the following is a translation:

" Here is entombed happiness, so eagerly sought by mortals! Alas, I am deprived of my liberty, sweet liberty! and my only consolations are vain complaints and unavailing tears! If [here some words were illegible] when you forsake us, the days lag on like ages. Live there [some words effaced] if you have had, O mortal! the misfortune to incur suspicion, do not imagine that you will so soon depart hence. The hour of entrance into this fatal place is too well known: but no man knows when the happy moment of his departure shall come."

The walls of the Tower of London also furnish some interesting inscriptions, though, thank God, this fortress is not stained with the crimes which distinguished that of France. In the Beauchamp Tower, one of the principal state prisons, several of these inscriptions were discovered in 1796, on making some alterations for the purpose of converting the building into a mess-house for the garrison. A young Fleming or Brabanter, of the name of Charles Bailly, who was an adherent of Mary Queen of Scots, has ornamented a panel with lozenges, and inscribed the following reflections:

J. H. S.

1571, die 10^o Aprilis.

Wise men ought circumspectly to se what they do; to examine before they speake; to prove before they take in hand: to beware whose company they use; and, above all things, to whom they trustee. Charles Bailly.

In another place, there is the following inscription:

'Principium sapiente timor Domini.
I. H. S. X. P. S. Be frend to one, be
eunemye to none, Anno D. 1571, 10
Sept. The most unhappy man in the
world is he that is not pacient in adver-
sities; for men are not killed with the
adversities they have; but with ye im-
patience which they suffer.'

Tout vient apoint, quy peult attendre
Gli sospiri ne son testimoni veri dell'an-
goscia mia.

wt. 29. Charles Bailly.'

In another part of the room there is a rude piece of sculpture by "Thomas Wyllingar." It is without date, and consists of a bleeding heart with the letters T. W., the initials of his own name on one side, and P. A., most

likely the initials of his mistress, on the other. There is also a figure of death holding a dart in the left hand, and an hour glass in the right; and on the opposite side of the bleeding heart are the words— " Thomas Wyllingar, goldsmith. My hart is yours tel dehe." No account has been preserved of this prisoner, or of the offence for which he was confined.

Another prisoner, whose name is unknown, has thus recorded the tedious period of his confinement. " Close prisoner 8 monthes, 32 weekes, 224 dayes, 5376 hours." This prisoner does not appear to have taken confinement so easily as a gentleman who passed some time in prison in 1715, and left the following memorial on the windows of his cell:—

" That which the world miscals a gaol,
A private closet is to me;
Whilst a good conscience is my bair,
And innocence my liberty."

But a truce to "prison thoughts." The Albums, consisting of fragments written by various persons in a blank book, came into use soon after the revival of letters. They appear to have originated with the Germans, and the Flemish and English travellers adopted them. Thus one of the first indications Algernon Sydney gave of his republican principles was, when the University of Copenhagen brought their Album to him and desired him to write something in it, when he thus recorded the awful purpose of his soul:—

" Manus hoc, inimici tyrannis,
Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem."

Madame Dacier, when called upon to write her name in an Album, refused it, because it contained the names of several of the most eminent scholars of Europe, saying, " it would be presumptuous to insert her's among those of so many distinguished persons." The gentleman insisted on it, and Madame Dacier then displayed the modesty of her character by writing in it the verse of Sophocles,

" Silence is the ornament of the female

sex."

Albums are now usually kept by ladies, and consist of original contributions, drawings, music, scraps of poetry, autographs, fragments of prose, sentiment, wit, and no wit at all, written either by the possessor or such of her friends and acquaintance as she can press into the service.

Such, indeed, in a great measure, is our Album, a few extracts from which

we have preceded by so long, though we trust not uninteresting, an essay. Our readers are no doubt aware that we are much in arrear with our correspondents, from the frequent apologies we have had to make for deferring the articles with which they favoured us. It was a conviction of this which prompted us to devote the few pages we are allowed in the present Number, to inserting a few of their contributions under the title of the Editor's Album, which we shall do without further apology. Of complimentary verses to Young Ladies, our Album has a most ample store. The following appear to us to be the best:

STANZAS TO ——.

If thou, whom most I love,
These simple, artless lays approve ;
If of thy care they aught beguile,
And make thy faded aspect smile,
A smile of fondness—such as late
Won all my heart, and changed my fate ;
Then for the noisy breath of fame,
Then for the lustre of a name,
I little care—if thee I please,
No cavils shall disturb my ease.
Whate'er betide, I blest shall be,
For thou art all the world to me.

S. N.

Women and wine are so frequently associated, that we shall need no apology for following the breathings of S. N. to his mistress, with an Anacreontic from the pen of another Correspondent :

YOUR GLASSES FILLED.

Your glasses fill, your glasses fill,
For thirsty souls like me
Love to see each brimmer thrill
The souls of men so free.
For know, if joy illumines your heart,
'Tis wine infuses wit,
Then drink one glass, 'twill sure im-
part,
The social comfort fit.
But should grim woe prey on your mind,
And care your heart imbue,
The only thing that o'er you'll find
Give joy, are glasses two.

Then do not spare this luscious store
Of wine.—For tho' I think
A maiden's kiss can please us more,
When we've not that 'tis drink.

Your glasses fill, your glasses fill,
For thirsty souls like me
Love to see each brimmer thrill
The souls of men so free.

ASM ARAH.

A great admirer of the curiosities of nature and of art, who ransacks the world for both, has presented us with

the following article, which will at least be acceptable to our botanical readers, and to all who look up "from nature to nature's God : "

ON THE SINGULAR PROPERTIES OF PLANTS AND FLOWERS.

There are some plants on which if a fly perches they instantly close and crush the insect to death. Plants also change their position and form in different circumstances and seasons. They take advantage of good weather, and guard themselves against bad weather; they open their leaves and flowers in the day, and close them at night; some close before sun-set, and others after; some open to receive rain, and others close to avoid it; some follow the sun, and others turn from it; the leaves of some plants are in constant motion during the day, and at night they sink to a kind of rest or sleep. It has been observed, that a plant has a power of directing its roots for procuring food; and that it has a faculty of recovering its natural position after it has been forced from it. A hop-plant, for instance, in twisting round a pole, directs its course from south to west, as the sun does; if it be tied in the opposite direction, it dies; but if it be left loose in this direction, it will regain its natural course in a single night. A honeysuckle proceeds in a certain direction till it be too long to sustain itself; it then acquires strength by shooting into a spiral form, and if it meet with another plant of the same kind, both these coalesce for mutual support, one twisting to the right and the other to the left. The colours of plants are so wonderfully diversified, and so constantly meet the eye, whenever it is directed to the face of nature, that they contribute, more than any other quality, to the beauty of the creation. Cowley says,

Flowers, the sole luxury which nature knew,
In Eden's pure and guiltless garden grew;
Gay without toil, and lovely without art,

They spring to cheer the sense, and glad the human heart.

It would be tedious to enumerate the beauties of the component parts of flowers. The microscope has enabled us to discover exquisite beauties. The leaves of rue seem full of holes, like a honeycomb; all the kinds of St. John's wort appear likewise stuck full of pin-holes to the naked eye; but the microscope shews that the places where

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those seem to be, are really covered with an exceeding thin and white membrane. A sage-leaf appears like rug or shag, full of knots tasselled with silver thrums, and embellished with fine round crystal beads or pendants, fastened by little footstalks. The back-part of a rose-leaf, but especially of sweet-brier, looks diapered with silver. Every body knows that the leaves of stinging-nettles are thick set with sharp prickles, that penetrate the skin when touched, and occasion pain, heat, and swelling, which symptoms were imagined formerly to ensue from the prickles being left in the wounds they made. But the microscope discovers something much more wonderful in this common vegetable, and shows that its prickles are formed and act in the same manner as the stings of living animals. Every one of them is found to be a rigid hollow body, terminating in the most acute point possible, with an opening near its end. At the bottom of this cavity lies a minute vessel or bag, containing a limpid liquor, which, upon the least touching of the prickle, is squirted through the little outlet, and, if it enters the skin, produces the mischief before mentioned by the pungency of its salts. Hence it comes to pass, that when the leaves of nettles are considerably dried by the heat of the sun, they sting but very little; whereas such as are green and juicy produce violent pain and inflammation. But the contrary to this would happen if the symptoms were only owing to the breaking of the prickles in the flesh, since, when dry, they must be more brittle, as well as more rigid, than when they abound with juice. The back-part of the herb mercury looks as if rough-cast with silver, and the ribs full of white transparent balls, like numberless grapes, fastened by little footstalks. So that "we may read and read again, and still find something new, something to please, and something to instruct, even in the noisome weed."

P. T. W.

A young lady, whose family had lived in affluence, but was afterwards much reduced by a fatal suit in Chancery, thus sighs over her misfortunes:

Are we to fall, to rise no more,
Lost to what we should have been,
Crush'd our hopes, our happiness all o'er,
And all that's past appear a dream?
No! for the future Heaven will provide;
Or why saved from the past?
Then let's each anxious fear deride,
And hope will prove our friend at last.

L. G.

"Alatus," who likes a good joke better than verse, supplies us with the following clincher from Voltaire:

MIRACLES.—One of the junior monks of a convent in Italy was so much addicted to performing miracles, that his Prior forbade him to continue the practice. The monk obeyed—but happening to pass one day as a poor bricklayer was in the act of falling from a scaffold, his humanity made him hesitate between the desire of saving the man's life, and his obedience to superior injunctions. He therefore merely commanded the labourer to remain in the air till he returned, and hastened away to the Prior, to inform him of what had happened. The good Prior gave him absolution for the sin he had committed in beginning a miracle without his permission, but allowed him to finish it, on condition of offending so no more!

The following beautiful lines, communicated by W. D. S., and written by the Honourable St. George Tucker, of Virginia, on his being asked why he had ceased to court the poetic muse, need no apology for an introduction to our Album :

Days of my youth,
Ye have glided away.
Hairs of my youth,
Ye are frosted and grey.
Eyes of my youth,
Your keen sight is no more.
Cheeks of my youth,
Ye are furrow'd all o'er.
Strength of my youth,
All your vigor is gone.
Thoughts of my youth,
Your gay visions are flown.

Days of my youth,
I wish not your recall.
Hours of my youth,
I'm content you should fall.
Eyes of my youth,
You much evil have seen.
Cheeks of my youth,
Bath'd in tears have you been.
Thoughts of my youth,
Ye have led me astray.
Strength of my youth,
Why lament your decay.

Days of my age,
Ye will shortly be past.
Pains of my age,
Yet awhile ye can last.
Joys of my age,
In true wisdom delight.
Eyes of my age,
Be religion your light.

Thoughts of my age,
Dread ye not the cold sod.
Hopes of my age,
Be ye fix'd on your God.

An anecdote of our great tragedian very opportunely presents itself at the present moment, when theatrical funds are celebrating their anniversaries :

Mr. KEAN.—At one of the Anniversary Dinners of the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund, at which His Royal Highness the Duke of York presided, Mr. Kean, as treasurer, had to return thanks, when he happily alluded to the flourishing state of the fund since His Royal Highness had become its patron, by saying, in that language of Shakspere, which he has often repeated with so much effect on the stage—

" Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by the Sun of
York ;
And all the clouds that lower'd upon our
house,

In the deep bosom of the ocean buried."

The mention of the stage almost involuntarily forces upon us " Dick Wildfire's Directions to the Players," but we cannot, for the life of us, get beyond the first couplet, and we therefore print it in justification of not reading any more of it—

" When first you come on, 'ere you've
time for a speech,
Take care to begin with a horrible
screech."

The next half dozen lines, by a correspondent, too modest to give either name or initials, will compensate to our readers for reading the couplet of doggrel we have just quoted :

ON A LADY WHO DIED IN CHILDBED.
The breath which you surrender, I receive :
I enter on a world—'tis yours to leave :
My cares are all to come—yours are all
past ;
And my first moment proves my mother's
last :
My life, your death—your pangs, my
power supply :
I kill in birth—and you in bearing die."

The following stanzas were written on a blank leaf of the Bible, by Mrs. Cornwell Baron Wilson, the fair author of a pretty volume of Poems :

Has grief's rude hand thy bosom torn,
And dost thou weep some fatal truth ?
Art thou untimely left to mourn,
The blighted visions of thy youth ?

The tear that trembles in thine eye,
Flows it for friendship ill repaid ?
Or does thy heart in secret sigh,
O'er hope deceived—or love betray'd ?

Then, pilgrim ! turn this soothing page,
Here find a solace for thy care ;
That can life's darkest ill assuage,
And calm the tortures of despair !
And learn with gratitude to know,
This sacred book to man was giv'n,
To light his erring steps below ;
But 'twill be realized in Heav'n !

But poetry avants, since here comes a correspondent, Jacobus, to wit, who burlesques it.

ON POETRY.

A certain Arabic author whom I have read somewhere, observes, " that the superior excellence of any science can only be demonstrated by the number of its votaries, and the attractive power of its charms"—and if so, I think poetry will bear the bell from all others.

Every man scribbles verses and attempts at poetry, as every woman curls her locks and endeavours to appear beautiful ; both seem willing to deceive themselves, for the one is as fondly prone to be acknowledged a poet, as the other to be celebrated for beauty. The ridiculous figure which some ladies make in their finery may be seen every day in the streets and public places of amusement ; and to illustrate the comparison, I shall show how ridiculous some men appear in their poetic apparel. Take the first instance from a fiddle-faddle poet to his mistress—

Pretty mis—se,
Come and kis—se,
With your black and rolling eye ;
Oh ! that lip—pe,
Let me sip—pe,
Or with anguish I shall die.

Another gentleman whom I have also the honour (shall I call it) to know, has such an art of swelling with bombast, that many of his pieces (which I am confident were written without any meaning) have, among the vulgar, passed for strong sense and sublimity. Mark the pomp of the following :

And round his head a flood of darkness
roll'd,
So massy, permanent, and thick, you
could
Not hear the cock's shrill din when morn
appear'd.

Here the *flowers of rhetoric*, and the *nutmeg and sugar of poetry*, are finely intermixed !

I could give innumerable instances

of this sort of the sublime, but the above may serve my present purpose. I shall now, sir, exhibit some few stanzas of a very extraordinary Psalm which was composed last summer on the distemper among the horned cattle, by the clerk of a certain parish in Yorkshire, and chorussed by the whole congregation. After the first four stanzas (which contain an account of the cattle lost, and the sufferer's names,) the fifth runs thus :

No Christian bull, nor cow, they say,
But takes it out of hand;
And we shall have no cows at all,
I doubt, within this land.

The doctors they alike have spoke
Like learned gentlemen,
And told us how the entrails look
Of cattle dead and gearn.

Yet they do nothing dō at all,
With all their learning store;
So Heav'n drove out this plague away,
And vex us *not no more*.

This piece was so well received that after service was over, it was desired again by all the congregation, except six farmers, who wept bitterly, and said the lines were *too moving*. 'Twas also much applauded by the 'squire, who himself writes verses, and may therefore (if you please) be esteemed a proper judge. As to the parson he was obliged to stand neuter; for 'tis as much as his benefice is worth to contradict the squire. When the people were going out of church, I heard him say to the clerk, "John, why what Psalm was this we had to-day? it was not one of David's." "No, sir," (quoth John, big with the new honour he had acquired,) "David never made such a Psalm since he was born. This is one of my own putting together, measter!"

I am, sir, &c. JACOBUS.

Silence now for a song:—here then we have it, communicated by a much-valued correspondent, TIM TOBYKIN.

SONG.

Gaelic Air.—“*O trío inhári Saoghach.*”

O, my own dear Mary,
Trust this faithful heart,
It shall never vary,
Though all else depart:

Beauty may be blighted,
Youth must pass away,
But the vows we plighted
Know not of decay.

Tempests may assail us
From affliction's coast,
Fortune's smile may fail us
When we need it most:
Fairest hopes may perish,
Firmest friends may change,
But the love we cherish,
Nothing shall estrange.

Dreams of fame and grandeur
End in bitter tears;
Love grows only fonder
With the lapse of years:
Time, and change, and trouble,
That coarser bands unbind,
Those silken cords redouble,
By true affection twin'd.

We had intended to introduce a portion of curious Epitaphs, Epigrams, Puns, Bon Mots, &c. but find we have only room for the following

TWELVE DROLL SIMILES.
“Rough and ready like a rat-catcher's dog.”—DAVIES.

1. Sharp work for the eyes—as the devil said when a broad-wheeled wagon went over his nose.
2. I'm down upon you—as the extinguisher said to the rushlight.
3. I know the world—as the monkey said, when he cut off his tail.
4. Turn'd soldier—as the lobster said when he popp'd his head out of the saucepan.
5. Musical and melancholy—as the cricket said to the tea-kettle.
6. Here we are all mustered—as the roast beef said to the Welch rabbits.
7. I'm all in a perspiration—as the mutton chop said to the gridiron.
8. Where shall I go?—as the bullet said to the trigger.
9. Off with a whisk—as the butcher said to the flies.
10. I'll be quick—as the fly said when he hopp'd out of the mustard-pot.
11. Every one take care of himself—as the jackass said when he was dancing among the chickens.
12. When a man is ashamed to shew the front of his face, let him turn round, and shew the back of it, as the turnstile said to the weather-cock.

I. W. W. P.

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